

7 March 1955

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director/Intelligence

THRU : Assistant Director, Research and Reports

FROM : NIS Coordinator

SUBJECT : Release of NIS Gazetteer Material for Public Use

PROBLEM:

To make NIS Gazetteer material available for use in gazetteers to be placed on public sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office.

DISCUSSION:

At the inception of the NIS Program in 1948 there was an immediate need for establishing uniformity in geographic names to avoid ambiguity and confusion in their use throughout the National Intelligence Survey. A program of NIS Gazetteers was therefore developed [redacted] by the staff of the U.S. Board on Geographic Names (BGN), Department of the Interior, which was charged by statute with the responsibility for determining standard geographic names for the Government. NIS Gazetteers have now been published on approximately 80 foreign countries. They serve as the standard reference works throughout the Government for foreign geographic names. The extension of this use to the public would be beneficial to the Government and to the intelligence community by providing common geographic reference material for development of maps, documents, and other published material.

This broader use of NIS Gazetteer material was envisaged by this Agency at such time as security restrictions would permit, and the Executive Secretary, U.S. Board on Geographic Names was so notified by letter of 13 January 1949 from the Assistant Director, Research and Reports (Tab "A").

While originally the NIS Gazetteers were classified "Restricted" in order to protect the order of priority in which the NIS Areas were being developed, the NIS Committee more recently held that they could be declassified under the provisions of Executive Order No. 10501. However, the NIS Gazetteers were controlled "For Official Use Only" in order to restrict them to their primary purpose of supporting intelligence requirements.

On file DOI release instructions apply.

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The Executive Secretary, U.S. Board on Geographic Names, was notified of this decision of the NIS Committee and advised that there was no further security restriction to the public use of NIS Gazetteer material. The U.S. Board on Geographic Names considered the matter and by memorandum (Tab "B") requested that CIA authorize the Board to arrange with the Superintendent of Documents for the printing of additional copies of NIS Gazetteers for public sale as printed or reprinted by CIA, with the provision that public sale copies will have covers and title pages prepared by, and bearing the name of, the BGN and containing no reference to CIA or NIS, [redacted]

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CONCLUSION:

The public sale of NIS Gazetteer material under the above guidelines would be of benefit to the public and the intelligence community, and would involve no security considerations [redacted]

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RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the attached letter (Tab "C") granting the authority requested by the U.S. Board on Geographic Names be approved and dispatched.

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Attachments: (3)

- 1 - Tab "A"
- 1 - Tab "B"
- 1 - Tab "C"

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